

55MUNVII

UNDP



STUDY GUIDE

UNDP Study Guide

Agenda: Examining the Institutionalisation of Integrational Equity and the Incorporation of the Legal Rights of Future Generations into the 2024 UN Declaration on Future Generations

- 1. Letter from the dais**
- 2. Introduction To The Committee**
- 3. Mandate**
- 4. Introduction To The Agenda**
- 5. Key Terms And Definitions**
- 6. Past UN Actions**
- 7. Causes**
- 8. Impacts**
- 9. QARMA**

Letter From The Dais

Dear Delegates,

As 55 MUN VII approaches, we encourage you to prepare thoroughly and familiarise yourselves with the key issues surrounding your committee's agenda. While understanding the problem is essential, the real challenge lies in developing solutions that are practical, sustainable, and capable of bringing about meaningful change.

We look forward to debates grounded in research, diplomacy, and a genuine willingness to work towards common ground. We encourage you to think critically, engage constructively, and approach each challenge with a clear focus on achievable outcomes.

We wish you the very best for the conference and look forward to the discussions ahead.

Regards,
The Dais

Introduction to the Committee

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), established in 1965, is the UN's leading development agency, working in approximately 170 countries and territories. It supports Member States in addressing poverty, inequality, environmental challenges, and governance issues while promoting sustainable human

development. Its work is guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

UNDP assists governments through technical expertise, policy advice, and institutional capacity-building to develop effective and sustainable policies. In relation to intergenerational equity and the 2024 UN Declaration on Future Generations, the committee provides a platform to examine how governments can incorporate long-term planning, accountability, and the interests of future generations into national development frameworks while balancing present-day priorities with future needs.

Mandate

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), established in 1965 by the United Nations General Assembly, is the UN's leading development agency, working in approximately 170 countries and territories. Its mandate is to eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities, strengthen governance, and promote sustainable human development. UNDP assists Member States through technical expertise, policy guidance, institutional capacity-building, and development partnerships to address economic, social, and environmental challenges while advancing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

UNDP promotes inclusive and sustainable development by supporting effective institutions, strengthening public policy, encouraging equitable access to resources, and integrating environmental sustainability into national development strategies. Its work also includes climate action, disaster risk reduction, crisis prevention, and recovery, helping countries develop policies that balance immediate needs with long-term development objectives. Through cooperation

with governments, civil society, and international organisations, UNDP supports countries in building resilient societies and ensuring that development benefits all sections of the population.

In relation to intergenerational equity, UNDP's mandate is relevant to the development of policies that consider the long-term consequences of present-day decisions. It can support Member States in incorporating future-oriented planning into national development frameworks, strengthening institutions responsible for sustainable policymaking, and promoting accountability for environmental, economic, and social outcomes. Although UNDP does not create binding international law, it can provide technical assistance and policy recommendations to help countries implement relevant international commitments, including the principles reflected in the 2024 UN Declaration on Future Generations, while safeguarding the interests of both present and future generations

Introduction to the agenda

The agenda addresses how the principle of intergenerational equity and the fair treatment of present and future generations can be formally embedded into international law and institutions. It emphasizes that decisions made today have long-lasting consequences, creating what the UN calls an “intergenerational multiplier effect.” This means that policies on climate change, resource use, and governance will not only affect current populations but also billions of people yet to be born.

At the heart of this agenda is the 2024 UN Declaration on Future Generations, adopted at the Summit of the Future. This declaration builds upon earlier commitments such as the Rio Declaration (1992) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, but goes further by explicitly recognizing future generations as rights holders. It calls

for institutional safeguards to ensure that their interests are protected in law, policy, and governance.

The agenda therefore explores two main dimensions:

1. Institutionalism of Intergenerational Equity embedding the principle into durable structures such as constitutions, treaties, UN bodies, and monitoring mechanisms.
2. Legal Rights of Future Generations moving beyond moral obligations to codify enforceable rights, including the right to a healthy environment, sustainable resources, peace, and justice.

This agenda matters because:

1. Climate Change: Current emissions will shape the lives of future generations.
2. Resource Management: Overuse of natural resources risks depriving future generations of basic needs.
3. Global Governance: Without institutional safeguards, future generations remain voiceless in international law.
4. Human Rights Expansion: Extending rights frameworks to those not yet born strengthens justice and sustainability.

By institutionalizing intergenerational equity, the UN seeks to ensure that the rights of future generations are safeguarded alongside those of the present. This agenda reframes governance so that decisions are measured not only by their immediate impact but also by their long-term consequences. It represents a transformative step in global governance, affirming the UN's commitment to building a fairer, more resilient, and sustainable world that bridges the past, present, and future.

Key terms and Definitions

1. Intergenerational Equity

The principle that all generations — past, present, and future — deserve fair treatment. Current generations must not exploit resources or make decisions that harm future generations' ability to thrive.

2. Future Generations

People not yet born who will inherit the consequences of today's policies, environmental conditions, and governance structures. Recognized as rights-holders in the 2024 UN Declaration.

3. Institutionalism

Embedding values and principles (like intergenerational equity) into durable structures such as laws, constitutions, and international organizations to ensure long term enforcement.

4. Legal Rights of Future Generations

Formal recognition that future generations have enforceable rights — for example, the right to a healthy environment, sustainable resources, and peace.

5. UN Declaration on Future Generations (2024)

A landmark document adopted at the Summit of the Future, affirming commitments to protect future generations through sustainability, justice, and institutional safeguards.

6. Sustainability

Meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. Central to intergenerational equity.

7. Intergenerational Multiplier Effect

The idea that today's actions (positive or negative) have amplified consequences across multiple generations.

8. Rule of Law

The principle that laws must be applied fairly and consistently. Protecting future generations requires embedding their rights into legal frameworks.

9. Human Rights

Fundamental rights inherent to all people. The agenda extends this concept to include those not yet born.

10. Ombudsperson for Future Generations

A proposed institutional role at national or UN level to represent and safeguard the interests of future generations.

11. Youth Participation

Recognizing young people as agents of change whose voices must be included in policymaking to ensure continuity of intergenerational justice.

12. Climate Justice

A framework linking climate change to human rights and equity, emphasizing that future generations will disproportionately suffer from current emissions.

13. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The UN's 17 goals for 2030, designed to balance economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection directly tied to intergenerational equity.

14. Precautionary Principle

A legal and ethical principle: when an action's impact on future generations is uncertain, policymakers must err on the side of caution.

15. Global governance

The system of international institutions and norms that coordinate collective action. Institutionalizing intergenerational equity requires reforming global governance structures.

16. Rio Declaration (1992)

An earlier UN declaration that introduced principles of sustainable development and intergenerational responsibility, serving as a foundation for the 2024 declaration.

17. Intergenerational Dialogue

Structured conversations between older and younger generations to ensure continuity of values, knowledge, and responsibility.

18. Environmental Degradation

The deterioration of natural resources (forests, water, biodiversity) that undermines the rights of future generations.

19. Constitutional Entrenchment

The process of embedding intergenerational rights into national constitutions, making them legally binding and harder to reverse.

20. Global Solidarity

The recognition that protecting future generations requires collective responsibility across nations, not just individual efforts.

Past UN Actions

- **2015 :Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** Acting as the foundational resolution for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this landmark agenda pledged to heal and secure the planet while keeping long term planetary boundaries in mind.
- **2020 :UN75 Declaration**
World leaders made 12 specific commitments, prominently featuring a pledge to listen and work with youth and protect future generations from long term shocks.
- **2021 : Secretary General's Report**
This landmark report dedicated an entire chapter to succeeding generations, formally recommending the creation of the UN Declaration on the Future generations.
- **2023 :UN Common Principles on Future Generations**
Developed across the UN agencies to guide the system on embedding human rights, strategic foresight, and the precautionary principle into institutional planning.
- **2023 : Our Common Agenda Policy Brief 1**
A dedicated UN policy paper outlining structural mechanism like national ombudspersons, impact assessment, and a declaration framework
- **April 2024 :Intergovernmental Consultations and Zero Draft Release**
Initiated by the UN General Assembly co-facilitators, this marked the official release and launch of intergovernmental negotiations for the Zero Draft of the Declaration on Future Generations, setting the stage for its eventual adoption.

- **June 2024 : Revisions of the Declaration on Future Generations**
Adopted at the UN Summit for the Future to safeguard the interests of future generations.
- **September 2024 : Adaptation of the Declaration on Future Generations**
Formally adopted by consensus at UN headquarters to commit member states to protect future generations in decision making.

Causes

1. **Political short termism:**
Governments are constrained by short election cycles and current national interest which do not enable them to deal with long term risks and threats such as emerging security problems and planetary problems.
2. **Multilateral Strain & Trust Deficits:**
The inability of the International community to reach a consensus on key issues through existing mechanisms, such as the United Nations Security Councils, resulted in complete standstill. Member states called for a multilateral framework to reform global governance and restore trust.
3. **Transboundary Risks:**
The challenges facing humanity today are complex and require a coordinated response at a global level. They cross borders and are increasingly out of the control of individual states.

Intergenerational Multiplier:

As mentioned in the preamble of the declaration, current government decisions have an “inter generational multiplier

effect”, and they affect the sovereignty and security of future generations

4. Lack of oversight:

Before the adoption of the declaration, there was a lack of dedicated UN mechanisms for long term foresight to ensure that states do not violate the sovereignty and security of present and future generations through their actions.

5. Accumulation of Economic debt:

Slow progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) causes nations to accumulate heavy financial liabilities, severe inflation, and sovereign debt. This unfairly transfers systemic financial strain and economic losses onto future generations

6. Resources Depletion:

Overconsumption and environmental destruction deprive future generations of stable ecosystems and essential global commons. The depletion of finite natural assets creates severe long term restorations costs and ecological instability.

7. Demographic Realities in Developing Nations:

Official UN demographic projections indicate that the vast majority of future global population growth will occur in low and middle income countries. Targeted legal protections are necessary to shield these populations from compounding global inequalities.

8. Lack of Political Representation:

Unborn generations possess no voicing rights, political influence, or legal representation in current decision making processes. Consequently, their basic rights to development and

equity must be protected through formal legislative and institutional frameworks.

9. **Active Youth & Civil Society Advocacy:**

Sustained movement building by global youth, indigenous groups, and civil society has served as a primary catalyst pushing UN member states to formalize intergenerational equity on the international agenda.

Impacts

1. **Generational Economy & Resource Flows**

- The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) describes a “*hidden generational economy*” where resources flow between children, working adults, and older persons.
- **Impact:** If future generations are legally recognized, governments must strengthen education, healthcare, and pensions to ensure balanced support across age groups.
- National Transfer Accounts show that adults contribute more than they receive during working years, while children and older persons rely heavily on public investment and family support. Without institutional safeguards, this system risks collapse under ageing populations.

2. **Labour Markets & Employment**

- Embedding intergenerational equity means creating **decent and inclusive work opportunities** for both current and future generations.
- **Impact:** Policies must promote multigenerational workforces, combat age discrimination, and enhance women’s participation.

- UN regional commissions (ECLAC, ESCAP, UNECE) stress that intergenerational solidarity requires equitable labour markets and lifelong training.

3. Social Protection & Care Systems

- Recognizing future generations as rights holders forces governments to **expand social protection systems**.
- **Impact:** Stronger pensions, healthcare, and long term care systems reduce inequality and ensure sustainability.
- UN reports highlight that ageing populations increase fiscal pressures, making reforms urgent to avoid burdening future generations.

4. Education & Human Capital

- **Impact:** Institutionalizing intergenerational equity requires sustained investment in education and skills training.
- **Evidence:** The UN Declaration on Future Generations (2024) emphasizes youth as “agents of change” and calls for intergenerational dialogue to safeguard future prosperity.

5. Climate & Environmental Economics

- **Impact:** Legal rights for future generations strengthen climate justice, requiring governments to reduce emissions and protect ecosystems.
- The declaration links sustainability directly to socio economic stability, warning that environmental degradation undermines livelihoods and inflates costs for future societies.

6. Fiscal Sustainability

- **Impact:** Governments must balance current spending with long-term obligations. Recognizing future generations legally means avoiding debt and policies that shift burdens unfairly.

- UN DESA notes that ageing populations and healthcare costs strain fiscal systems, requiring reforms to maintain intergenerational fairness.

7. Strengthening Multilateralism

- The declaration commits states to build a **more effective and resilient multilateral system** with the UN at its core.
- **Impact:** Countries must cooperate more closely on long-term issues like climate change, migration, and technological governance.
- The UN stresses that transparency, confidence, and trust are essential to safeguard future generations.

8. Peace and Security

- The agenda links intergenerational equity directly to **international peace and security**.
- **Impact:** States are urged to prevent conflicts and uphold the rule of law, since wars and instability have devastating long-term effects on future generations.
- The declaration notes that investing in peace and human rights today is the most effective way to protect future generations.

9. Global Governance Reform

- The agenda is part of the broader **Pact for the Future**, which seeks to reshape global governance.
- **Impact:** Institutions must adopt foresight tools, intergenerational impact assessments, and mechanisms to include youth voices in decision making.
- CIDOB analysis highlights that the declaration institutionalizes long-term thinking, building on earlier frameworks like the Brundtland Report and UNESCO's 1997 Declaration on Responsibilities of Present Generations.

10. Youth and Intergenerational Dialogue

- Recognizing youth as “agents of change” creates new geopolitical dynamics.
- **Impact:** States must integrate youth participation into both national and international policymaking, strengthening legitimacy and inclusivity.
- The Pact for the Future commits to meaningful youth participation at national and international levels, supported by the UN Youth Fund.

11. Climate and Resource Diplomacy

- Intergenerational equity reframes climate negotiations as **justice across time**, not just across borders.
- **Impact:** Countries must cooperate on emissions reduction, biodiversity protection, and resource sharing, since unsustainable practices threaten future generations globally.
- The declaration ties sustainability directly to safeguarding future generations, reinforcing commitments under the SDGs and Paris Agreement.

12. Trust and Legitimacy in International Law

- By embedding future generations into legal frameworks, states reaffirm the **universality of international law**.
- **Impact:** This strengthens trust in global institutions and reduces geopolitical fragmentation.
- The declaration explicitly calls for respect for international law and human rights as guiding principles for protecting future generations.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer (QARMA)

1. What role do legislative loopholes play in limiting the institutionalisation of intergenerational equity and the protection of future generations?
2. How can governments strengthen institutional frameworks to ensure that the needs and rights of future generations are considered in present-day decision-making?
3. To what extent do domestic political, economic, and social challenges hinder the implementation of intergenerational equity across different countries?
4. How can the 2024 UN Declaration on Future Generations be translated into effective national policies and institutional mechanisms?
5. What role does education play in raising awareness about intergenerational equity and the responsibilities of present generations towards future generations?
6. How does poverty contribute to intergenerational inequality, and what measures can ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities across generations?
7. How can governments incorporate the rights and interests of future generations into national development strategies, policymaking, and public institutions?

8. What measures can be taken to strengthen institutional accountability and ensure that present-day decisions do not compromise the well-being of future generations?

9. How can cultural, social, and political barriers be addressed to promote inclusive decision-making and equitable representation of future generations?

10. How can legal frameworks and international cooperation support the implementation of the 2024 UN Declaration on Future Generations, and what mechanisms can monitor progress and ensure accountability?

